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## Justice in Yoknapatawpha County: Some Symbolic Motifs in Faulkner's Later Writing

ALBERT GERARD

Ever since George Marion O'Donnell revealed the existence of hidden layers of meaning beneath the forbidding surface of Faulkner's fiction, the Legend of the South has been considered by all pattern-diggers as one of the richest deposits since Kafka. Extraction is the more exciting as the ore lies deeper, and intensive exploitation has resulted in the discovery of thick strata of moral, social, and metaphysical patterns of meaning. So far, these patterns have all been of the same metal, the common lead of corruption and degeneracy and hopelessness. The individual stories of the Sutpens, the Compsons and the Sartorises have been construed as the objective correlatives to various processes of decadence: of the South (Malcolm Cowley), of the American personality (Edwin Berry Burgum), of Western culture (Robert Penn Warren). The historiographer of Yoknapatawpha County has become the chronicler of the modern Apocalypse.

It may sound impertinent to suggest that the Faulknerian Apocalypse is not in fact total Apocalypse, or, at least, that it is not final. Yet his work since the war is entirely different in tone from his novels of the thirties. *Intruder in the Dust*, *Knight's Gambit*, and *Requiem for a Nun* unfold tales of salvation, not of doom or decay. Though it has become fashionable in certain circles to dismiss these works as mere trash, I think it would be more honest to apply to them first the same kind of serious criticism that proved so rewarding for our understanding of the pre-war novels and stories. I intend to treat some of the stories gathered in *Knight's Gambit* as samples from the new quarries where Faulkner now gets the substance of his material.

Since they are mostly 'whodunits' in the good, solid and highly serious twentieth century tradition, these stories are inevitably concerned with the idea of justice:

'I'm interested in truth,' the sheriff said.

'So am I,' Uncle Gavin said. 'It's so rare. But I am more interested in justice and human beings.'

'Ain't truth and justice the same thing?' the sheriff said.

'Since when?' Uncle Gavin said. 'In my time I have seen truth that was anything under the sun but just, and I have seen justice using tools and instruments I wouldn't want to touch with a ten-foot fence rail.'

Like the sheriff in "Tomorrow," Faulkner has always been interested in truth, though he has mostly described that aspect of truth which was anything under the sun but just. At the same time, however, he has managed to make of the bulk of his work a lurid description of the workings of immanent justice. He has shown how greed and power lead to corruption and defeat according to the overwhelming logic of human hubris. The Legend of the South develops as an illustration of Macbeth's dictum

that we but teach

Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return

To plague the inventor.

The Legend tells how the descendents of the white settlers who despoiled the Indians and exploited the Negroes have been in turn dispossessed of their riches, their power, and their culture by the new invaders coming from the North. It is, at bottom, a very simple and straightforward story of crime and punishment. If there is any gleam of hope and salvation in this gloomy picture, it is not easily distinguishable.

\* \* \* \*

The striking fact about *Knigh's Gambit* is that most of the stories contained in it seem to have been built on an entirely new pattern. The story called "Monk" provides the best starting-point for an estimate of the new trends in Faulkner's imaginative thought, because it combines the familiar Faulknerian ingredients of crime, idiocy, and cor-

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ruption with an unexpected suggestion that there may still be some reason for hope, a shred of human dignity, a dim aspiration towards the good life.

Monk is "a moron, perhaps even a cretin," and develops according to type. He has been brought up in the wild pine hill country near Jefferson by "an old woman who lived like a hermit," and after her death, "by an old man named Fraser who was a whisky maker of wide repute." When Fraser dies, Monk is brought to town and goes to work at a filling station. Some time later he is imprisoned for a crime he has not committed. When the facts come out five years later, County Attorney Gavin Stevens gets a pardon for Monk. But Monk refuses to leave the penitentiary; "He was a trusty now; he had transferred to the warden the same dog like devotion which he had given to old Fraser." Subsequently Monk murders the warden and is sentenced to death.

Into this plot, Faulkner has introduced an unexpected meaning which is made clear in the two climactic utterances which allow the reader a glimpse into the puzzling depths of Monk's childish mind.

When he is first indicted for the murder and the judge asks him his name, he proudly answers: "My name ain't Monk; it's Stonewall Jackson Odlethorp." As the narrator comments:

if it were true, he could not have heard it in almost twenty years since his grandmother (if grandmother she was) had died: and yet he could not even recall the circumstances of one month ago when he had committed a murder. And he could not have invented it. . . So he could never have heard of Stonewall Jackson. Yet there it was, *inherited from the earth, the soil, transmitted to him through a self-pariahed people—something of bitter pride and indomitable undefeat of a soil and the men and women who trod upon it and slept within it.* (Italics mine.)

Monk, then, is the Faulknerian idiot with a difference: somewhere deep down, "in that mind that he hardly possessed," there is the unrealized remembrance of the glory of his nation.

Again, after killing the warden, Monk, serenely standing on the scaffold, pronounces his second absurd, meaningless, yet significant utterance: "I have sinned against God and man and now I have done paid it out with my suffering. And now I am going out into the free world and farm." And again the narrator comments:

He could have known but little more about farming than about Stonewall Jackson; certainly he had never done any of it. He had seen it, of course, the cotton and the corn in the fields, and men

working it. But he could not have wanted to do it himself before, or he could have, since he could have found chances enough. Yet he turns and murders the man who had befriended him and, whether he realized it or not saved him from comparative hell and upon whom he had transferred his capacity for doglike fidelity and devotion and on whose account a week ago he had refused a pardon: his reason being that he wanted to return into the world and farm land.

It is soon revealed that Monk had been taught the solemn and cryptic words by the convict who had prompted him to the murder. But their mesmeric power upon his mind can only be explained by the presence in him of some deep-seated, hitherto slumberous, yet living and active feeling for what Faulkner calls, in another story, "the broad, heat-miraged land . . . , the cotton and the corn of God's long-fecund remorseless acres, *which would outlast any corruption and injustice*" (italics mine).

\* \* \* \*

Monk provides us with the necessary clues to the new trends in Faulkner's outlook, for he testifies to the presence of two positive elements in the decayed soul of Southern man: *a dim sense of the glory of his own past*, and *an obscure instinctive attachment to the soil*.

Close scrutiny reveals how charged with essentials are Monk's last words. Though uttered on the threshold of death they imply a scheme of life. A similar situation appears in *Requiem for a Nun*. After the sin against God and man, and its purgation through suffering, comes the expectation of happiness and salvation, which is here associated with 'freedom' and 'farmin'. This is the theme of the goodness of nature and of the right attitude towards nature, which has already been developed by Faulkner, though in a negative way; for his works have always stressed the degradation of nature (including human nature) by human folly and greed.

The treatment of the theme is carried a step further toward optimism in "Smoke," where the frustrated expectations of Monk are realized by the hero, Virginius Holland. In this story, one or the other of the twin sons of farmer Anselm Holland is thought to have killed their father, with whom they were no longer on speaking terms, until County Attorney Gavin Stevens forces their cousin Granby Dodge to confess his crime. Dodge's motive was greed: he intended to kill his cousin Virginius afterwards, as he was his heir by a mutual deed-of-trust will. In the economy of the story, Dodge and Virginius stand

in significant contrast. Dodge represents another familiar figure in Faulkner,

being half a stock-trader and half a lay preacher—a small, sandy, nondescript man whom you could not remember a minute after you looked at his face and then away—and probably no better at either of these than at farming.

Covetous and unprincipled, he is, like Popeye and Flem Snopes, a fit representative of the Mercantile Type.

But Faulkner does not give Dodge more attention than his morality deserves, which is surprising. On the contrary, he dwells at far greater length on the character of Virginius, who is the focal figure of the story. Unlike his twin brother, Virginius is a real farmer. He is calm and self-possessed, almost disquietingly so. But he loves the land, and it is only fair that his father should have bequeathed the farm to him. When Virginius wants to give half of his land to his brother, Stevens says: "You just treat it right, as he knows you will. Anse don't need any land." This is one of the most cheerful endings ever achieved by Faulkner. It is in accordance with the pattern of *Triumphant Justice*; Virginius has the right attitude towards nature, one of love and knowledge and veneration, and he gets his reward.

The symbolism of the farm taken from the exploiter and given to him who deserves it, is unmistakable, though pervaded with an optimism that is entirely unexpected by ordinary Faulknerian standards. This pattern, however, is repeated in the title-piece, "Knight's Gambit," where much attention is given to "a once-simple country house transmogrified into something a little smaller than a Before-the-War Hollywood set" by the lavish pretentiousness of the 'stranger,' the prosperous bootlegger called Harris, who has married the only daughter of the owner. The significant thing about this house is that it is to become the property of Gavin Stevens, just as old Holland's farm was to go to Virginius. On the allegorical level, it may be taken to represent the actual condition of the South under the impact of Yankee civilization embodied in the character of Harris. This is probably the reason why Faulkner so carefully describes the progress of its 'transmogrification' after the death of Mrs. Harris's father:

When he (Harris) came home that summer, he stayed two months, and when he left there were electric lights and running water in the house, and the day-long night-long thump and hum of the pump and dynamo were the mechanical sounds where there used to be the creak of the hand-turned well-pulley and of the ice-cream freezer on Sunday mornings; and now there was nothing

left of the old man who had sat on the front gallery with his weak toddy and Ovid and Horace and Catullus for almost fifty years, except his home-made hickory rocking chair and the finger-prints on the calf bindings of his books, and the silver goblet he drank from, and the old setter bitch which had dozed at his feet.

In the ensuing months, the chair and the goblet and the boxes with the books are given away, and the bitch dies, and the house is completely rebuilt (or should one say 'reconstructed?') to look "like the Southern mansion in the moving picture, only about five times as big and ten times as Southern." It becomes then obvious that, as Stevens had said, "the impact of the money had been stronger even than the ghost of the old stoic, the sedentary and provincial cosmopolite."

\* \* \* \*

Mrs. Harris's father brings us back to the other theme alluded to in Monk's words: a redeeming sense of history and tradition. But in him, the symbolism is enlarged, for the tradition that appeals to him is not one of heroic deeds and sublime characters: it is rather the tradition of refined culture and the simple life dear to the best among the Southern aristocracy. Faulkner gives only an outline of

the widower-owner who stayed at home and farmed his heritage and, with a constant tumbler of thin whisky-and-water at his elbow and an aged setter bitch dozing at his feet, sat through the long summer afternoons in a home-made chair on the front gallery reading in Latin the Roman poets . . .

but each detail is charged with meaning in this picture of a vanishing type, in whom the right attitude to nature and living things was combined with moderate epicurism and cultured leisure to produce an impression of seemingly unassailable peace.

The character of Mrs. Harris's father, whose way of life contrasts with the feverishness, the love of money and the blatant extravagance of her husband, bears definite resemblance to that of Gavin Stevens. The county attorney appears as a personification of the regenerated South. First, as a descendant of an old planter family, he stands for something like the Spirit of the South, the positive element in the Southern soul, which might be described as a warm-hearted concern for the soil and culture and human beings, as contrasted with the callous greed and the obsession with cold scientific truth characteristic of Yankee civilization. Further, Stevens is a lawyer. Now, to borrow the words of one of the characters in "Tomorrow," "There's two sides to the law": punishment and reward. So far, Faulkner's main interest

has been in punishment; but with the character of Stevens, new aspects of justice are introduced: reward, hope, salvation.

Stevens' sense of justice is rooted in his love for the land, for "God's long-fecund acres, which would outlast any corruption and injustice." Nature is a kind of fertility-goddess, teeming with devices to overcome the evil done by man. Justice, in this view, is closely akin to nature: it cooperates with nature, using similar devious but, in the end, triumphant, means: "Isn't justice always unfair?" he asks, "Isn't it always composed of injustice and luck and platitude in unequal parts?" So he tricks Granby Dodge into confessing his crime.

But however unfair or platitudinous its ways may be, justice, like nature, stands above man. Dodge, according to Stevens' analysis,

is a man both shrewd and ignorant at the same time: a dangerous combination. Ignorant enough to believe that the law is something like dynamite: the slave of whoever puts his hand to it first, and even then a dangerous slave; and just shrewd enough to believe that people avail themselves of it, resort to it only for personal ends.

Dodge's arrogant and egoistic attitude towards the law is similar to his attitude towards the land and human life; for all its shrewdness, it is the wrong one, and so is bound to fail in the end.

The triumph of Stevens is the triumph of the spirit of the land against exploitation, the triumph of justice against murderous possessiveness, but it is also the triumph of the cultured tradition against utilitarianism. In Stevens, a significant feature of Mrs. Harris's father is developed in fuller detail. Not only is Stevens a scholar, a Harvard man, often seen fingering his Phi Beta Kappa key; not only has he been engaged for twenty years on a translation of the Old Testament back into classic Greek (a symbol of disinterested culture that strikes the European reader by its peculiarly American *naivete*); but he is also a man of wide cosmopolitan experience, who served as a stretcher-bearer in the French army during the war, and went back to Europe in 1919 to finish his Ph.D. at Heidelberg.

In some of its aspects, then, the plot of "Knight's Gambit" is a dramatization of the forces that are shaping the destiny of the South. While Gavin Stevens represents the positive elements in the Southern mind (the right attitude to nature, a loving sense of justice, and the tradition of culture), the actual condition of the South is embodied in the country house and in the character of Mrs. Harris. But whereas the house is hopelessly spoiled, Mrs. Harris, though likewise submitted

to the feverish activities of her husband, does not change. For one thing, she is too full of the milk of human kindness to share his arrogance towards people and things. In her letters from abroad her correspondents find her

talking not about names or places but about the children's health and schooling, not of the ambassadors and millionaires and exiled kings, but of the families of the porters and waiters who had been kind or at least gentle with her and the children, and of the postmen who delivered the mail from home.

And it is just this attachment, not to the house, but to the humaneness that the house once stood for, which allows her to resist the temptation of money, and which is the essence of her surprising 'toughness',

that constancy, that imperviousness, that soft still malleableness which had lived ten years in the glittering capitals of Europe, without even having to be aware that she had completely resisted them

and not only them, but her husband as well, and the glossy showiness of money and material comfort.

In the total order of the story, Mrs. Harris is complementary to Stevens. Whereas he stands for redeeming consciousness and energy, she has instinctively kept herself intact, ready to be saved from the golden grip of her husband. At the end of the story, a few years after the death of Harris, it becomes clear that she and Stevens had been in love with each other when they were young, and that, in the wisdom of their old age, they are going to be married at last.

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*Knight's Gambit* undoubtedly confirms the evidence of renewal contained in *Intruder in the Dust* and strengthened later in *Requiem for a Nun*. The average Yoknapatawphian may still have his fits of idiocy or violence; but he now has Gavin Stevens as a guardian angel at his side. Faulkner's obsessional preoccupation with degeneracy has given way to an optimistic view of life and history. The conclusion that emerges from this collection is startlingly different from the mood and the message of the bulk of his previous work. Yet, there is some continuity in the whole. Faulkner's aim is still to bring out the forgotten part of human experience. He had revealed the germs of decay which lay buried under the thick crust of apparent prosperity, and had studied their germination and full flowering in the midst of the boom-period of American capitalism. Now, as our distressed world is probing the murky depths of bitterness and despair and 'cosmic anxiety', he continues to show that life is not to be taken at its face value. Indeed, what

characterizes Faulkner is his refusal to be satisfied with a mirror-like reflection of the fleeting moods of the time. When society was optimistic and swollen with self-admiration, he would point out the corruption and the misery within, awakening in his reader a vivid awareness of the sound and the fury beneath the smooth shiny surface of our mechanical civilization. Since life has palpably proved to be true to the picture he gave, it is not entirely strange that his later work should contradict in all essentials his former Macbeth-inspired philosophy.

Faulkner's fiction has always resounded with echoes from *Macbeth*. The Legend of the South is a tale which often seems to have been told on purpose, to show that it signifies nothing. But surely the queerest of those echoes is to be found in "Tomorrow," in the words of Stevens about

the lowly and invincible of the earth—to endure and endure and  
then endure, tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

Time, here, is not the highway to dust and death and eternal frustration as it is in the Shakespearean context. On the contrary, it is the battlefield where endurance achieves its victory—not only the endurance of the father who will see his boy avenged in "Tomorrow," but also the 'constancy', the 'imperviousness', and 'toughness' of Mrs. Harris in "Knight's Gambit," and the inexhaustible mineral patience which enables nature to 'outlast' evil.

The above quotation is taken from the last act of the tragedy, when Macbeth's career comes to an end in the din of battle, while a new day dawns over Scotland. It should be noted that "Knight's Gambit" was written at the beginning of World War II. The story is interspersed with intimations of the war, and its local setting is thus enlarged. The story centres round the moment when a degraded way of life is falling into the sere, like a yellow leaf. It displays love of nature, love of man and love of justice as—to go on quoting from the last act of *Macbeth*—the remedies that will

Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff

Which weighs upon the heart.

The whole book is filled with a sense that the tragedy is over, that life, after all, is a tale that makes sense, and that, in the prophetic words of Old Siward, "Here comes newer hope."

## MIRRORS OF CHARTRES STREET

by William Faulkner

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## A Note on the Conclusion of "The Bear"

CARVEL COLLINS

In several of his most violently attacked and supported books Jung discusses a pattern which he calls the mandala. The essentials of his many statements about this pattern are efficiently summarized by Elizabeth Drew in her *T. S. Eliot*. She points out that to Jung the mandala is part of "the integration of the personality" and that he "traces an apparently purposive sequence of images creating the gradual shift from the ego as the centre of being, to a different centre" which will "reveal itself under the image of some form of enclosure . . . an isolated sacred place; visualized in dream as garden, courtyard or such. . . More and more, dramatic figures as actors cease to appear as symbols of the new centre, and it reveals itself as abstract pattern, in dream symbols of plastic design which bring extraordinary sensations of release, assurance and 'rightness.'

"What they bring is, according to Jung, the sense of *wholeness* of personality. . . Efforts to visualize the fleeting images in drawings take most varied forms, but according to Jung, have always certain elements in the design which are constant . . . the basic design includes always a circle, having a centre. . . Jung asserts that the mandala dream image always combines the elements of a circular rotation . . . some element of 'fourness,' and the all-important centre." Jung's own books go into further detail, suggesting that the mandala has significance as a symbol of the achievement of synthesis, of adjustment, of peace, of reconciliation between warring elements of the personality. Also, in his opinion the pattern accompanies the feeling that the universe is "one" and existence meaningful.

To turn to "The Bear" and the function of its concluding pages: critics have said that the next-to-last section, with its account of Ike's plantation background, spoils the unity of an otherwise successful hunting story. But if one regards the story as in great part an account of Ike's initiation into manhood, the next-to-last section concerning Ike's plantation heritage is essential, while the conclusion, especially its final two or three pages, describes his adjustment of the conflict between this heritage and his forest training. In Faulkner's earlier fiction the most psychologically autobiographical characters destroyed themselves, one of the several reasons for their self-destruction being their inability to make a working synthesis between their "civilized"

heredity and the more primitive elements of life. In contrast to those earlier characters Ike survives, because he is able to achieve this synthesis). "The Bear" emphasizes his achievement by placing it on the very concluding pages where we see Ike in his eighteenth year, two years after the death of the bear and the dog Lion and the old hunter-teacher Sam Fathers, visiting their burial knoll with its prominent four white corner posts. There he thinks about the dead and death. Then as he moves away from the four-cornered burial site toward the adjacent clearing he thinks about immortality and unity. He feels that the knoll is "no abode of the dead because there was no death, not Lion and not Sam; not held fast in earth but free in earth and not in earth but of earth, myriad yet undiffused of every myriad part, leaf and twig and particle, air and sun and rain and dew and night, acorn oak and leaf and acorn again, dark and dawn and dark and dawn again in their immutable progression, and, being myriad, one . . ."

At this point he confronts a great snake, which he addresses as a totem. Then he realizes that for some time he has been hearing a hammering sound coming from the adjacent clearing. This clearing, which the author earlier in the story specifically located precisely at the dividing line between the deforested land of "civilized" life and the primitive forest, contains a single large, isolated gum tree at its center—a tree in which, the story earlier told us, one might trap a dozen or so squirrels by stepping to its trunk and preventing their descent. Now as Ike enters the clearing he finds a hunting companion of his years of initiation seated at the base of the trunk hammering on a dismantled rifle while keeping a large number of squirrels in the tree, "forty or fifty of them leaping and darting from branch to branch until the whole tree had become one green maelstrom of mad leaves."

I take the episode on these concluding pages to contain most of the elements of text-book mandalas: an enclosed space, a central point, circular motion, a square or "fourness" (here the burial plot with its four white markers, which—if you will—seems to be psychologically moved into or at least toward the circle by the way in which the author presents Ike's realization that while standing inside the markers he has been hearing for some time the noise from the clearing), and feelings of unity and synthesis which Ike achieves here on the dividing line between the plantation land of his heredity and the virgin forest of his ritualistic initiation into manhood.

Whether Jung is right and men do experience such complex

mandalas I am certainly not competent to comment on. And whether Faulkner in concluding "The Bear" was unconsciously describing a mandala to symbolize Ike's situation or whether here as elsewhere in the story he is making skillful and conscious use of his reading it would be most interesting to learn.

## FAULKNER CRITICS: A Bibliography Breakdown

BRADLEY T. PERRY

This bibliography breakdown is limited to reviews and essays about specific Faulkner works. Criticism of a general nature has been omitted. The bibliography is continued from the Summer issue of *Faulkner Studies*.

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## Notes and Comments

With this issue *Faulkner Studies* concludes its second year of publication. At a time when the life-expectancy of a new review or quarterly is quite short, the continued support and fine reception of *Faulkner Studies* is gratifying and, as this twenty-page issue indicates, has enabled us to enlarge its scope. The sale of our limited edition of *Mirrors of Chartres Street* makes it possible for us to continue to serve, indefinitely, as a clearing house and central exchange for the discussion of "work in progress," ideas, questions, bibliography and other information pertinent to our readers.

Along these lines, several people at the recent MLA meeting in Chicago suggested that *Faulkner Studies* might perhaps arrange a meeting concurrent with the MLA at their 1954 meeting in New York. It is a tempting suggestion, and we invite readers' comments on the proposal.

The publication date of William Van O'Connor's book, *The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner*, is February 1, too late for review in this issue. Since Carvel Collins is at work on a full-length study of Faulkner's work, this should be an interesting and valuable year in Faulkner criticism.

This issue's contributors: *Albert Gerard*, a professor of English at Seraing, Belgium, is currently at work on a long study of Faulkner's

later work. We are especially interested in Professor Gerard's contribution because, as the first article by a foreign critic we have published, we hope it will add to the growing European interest in Faulkner and that it will stimulate comment in this country and abroad. *Carvel Collins* is a professor of English at M.I.T.

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Baiwir, Albert, "William Faulkner," *Abrégé de l'histoire du roman américain, Collection Savoire*, Manteau, Brussels, 1946, pp. 81-83.

Faulkner is a great rhetorician, and employs his rhetoric for the creation of character and scene. The milieu of his fiction is brutal and deformed, but it is also harmonious because it obeys its own esthetic laws. (W.V.O'C.)

\_\_\_\_\_, "William Faulkner," *Le déclin de l'individualisme chez les romanciers américains contemporains, Librairie E. Droz*, Paris 25, 1943, pp. 313-332.

Faulkner is a highly subjective artist and his work does not constitute a social document of the first order. However, it is not clear, whether Faulkner intended to be explicit about it or not, that the economic problems brought on by the Civil War have contributed greatly to the disintegration, psychological and social, with which the fiction is concerned. (W.V.O'C.)

Coughlan, Robert, "The Private World of William Faulkner," and "The Man Behind the Faulkner Myth," *Life*, 35, 13: 118-136, 35, 14: 55-68, September 28, 1953, October 5, 1953.

The plots of the Yoknapatawpha novels are recounted through the device of a mythical tour through the mythical county. Faulkner, who "acts like a farmer who has studied Plato and looks like a river gambler," has, like many people in the South, where tradition is so important, a rich family background. This background is outlined in some detail, with particular emphasis on the activities of Colonel William C. Falkner, Faulkner's writing great-grandfather. Mr. Coughlan maintains that there is more than a chance resemblance between Faulkner's family and the Sartoris of Yoknapatawpha County.

Faulkner's writing career was assisted at the beginning by Phil Stone, an Oxford lawyer, but others were not as favorably impressed. The rest of his career is described: from his move to the French Quarter of New Orleans in the shadow of Sherwood Anderson, to his return to Oxford after his acceptance of the Nobel Prize. (M.M.M.)

Moses, W. R., "Where History Crosses Myth: Another Reading of 'The Bear,'" *Accent*, 13:21-33, Winter, 1953

"The Bear" is an account of non-rational, dramatic myth-life in

conflict with history and man's rational acceptance of "the brute sequence of events." This is seen in the life of Isaac McCaslin who, until he was twenty-one, was able to live as a myth-man, a hunter fighting the opposing gods (represented by the bear) for his goddess (represented by the wilderness). But Isaac lived to see the context of his mythic drama destroyed by civilization, by the logging interests, in the same way that the bear is destroyed by the ruthless, "mechanical" dog, Lion. Isaac becomes an anachronism since he chooses to remain child-like—that is, a myth-man for whom the meaning of life is dramatized and formed by a non-rational pattern; he is seen at the end as a mythic king, patient and passive without either rebirth or abdication, without recognized authority and with a goddess become a ghost. (M.H.)

O'Connor, William Van, "The Wilderness Theme in Faulkner's 'The Bear,'" *Accent*, 13:12-20, Winter, 1953.

In "The Bear" and the other stories in *Go Down, Moses* the wilderness theme is combined with the theme of white injustice to the Negro. The former is seen in the life of the ascetic hunter, Isaac McCaslin, and in what he learns from the wilderness in his growth as a hunter; the latter is seen in the life of Lucas Beauchamp, the son of a mulatto slave, himself the son of Isaac's grandfather. The two strands, however, are not integrated successfully, for while the wilderness theme depicts man in an idyllic, sacramental, pre-civilized and uncorrupt relationship with nature and seems to look forward to a restoration of its values—"liberty, courage, pride, and humility"—its presentation does not work towards a realistic solution of the problems in the life of the Negro and society's guilt towards him. Isaac McCaslin is too passive a character and the wilderness is treated with too little recognition of its cruelties, as well as of its present and inevitable displacement by civilization, to provide more than an acknowledgement of, and a dream escape from, the unsolved problems of Faulkner's second theme. (M.H.)

Swiggart, Peter, "Moral and Temporal Order in *The Sound and The Fury*," *The Sewanee Review*, 61:221-237, Spring 1953.

Like all Faulkner characters, says Sartre, Quentin Compson seeks reality in an abstracted past because, since the future is unknown and the present an illusion, only the past can be clearly comprehended. But this is, according to Allen Tate, to ignore the emotional contemporaneity of past and present, and to create a dead past which has no bearing on present reality. Only by accepting life entire can time be transcended. Quentin, with his mechanical concept of time, cannot do this. Having failed to project moral value on the past by changing his memory of it, his only alternative is an attempt to transcend by suicide the meaningless sequence of events that is, to him, time. Sartre, then, has

overlooked the fact that, in the dramatic construction of the book, Quentin is balanced by the characters Dilsey and Benjy. Faulkner condemns Quentin's philosophy of despair, the result of his "egocentric isolation," and opposes to it the primitive wisdom of Dilsey and Benjy, who have never reached the intellectual sophistication of Quentin. Dilsey's vision is a religious one, based on human love; Benjy is also capable of selfless love. Thus both are able to transcend time and both are morally superior to Quentin, who can only extinguish it. (R.A.)

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